

## **Georgia CEM Summary Update**

### **May 28, 2009**

This information is a compilation of USDA APHIS VS and Georgia Department of Agriculture updates and is provided for stakeholders. Georgia state and federal animal health officials, horse owners and participating accredited veterinarians are working hard to carry out necessary testing, treatments, and complete investigations in a timely manner.

#### **A. CEM National Epidemiology Summary**

A total of 21 stallions have been confirmed by USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) as positive for *Taylorella equigenitalis*, the causative organism of contagious equine metritis (CEM). The most recently detected positive stallions are an American Hackney and a 16-year-old Dutch Warmblood located in Wisconsin, the seventh and eighth positive stallions in that State; they are the second and third stallion in this incident to be detected as positive on test breeding. Also positive is a 5-year-old domestic Arabian gelding in Iowa that was exposed to *T. equigenitalis* when he was still a stallion. The NVSL has also confirmed that five mares are positive for *T. equigenitalis*. None of the positive horses have yet been identified as the source of the outbreak; the epidemiologic investigation continues to pursue all available information relative to determining the origin of this outbreak, but no conclusions can yet be drawn.

In addition to the 21 positive stallions and 5 positive mares, locations have been confirmed for 913 additional horses exposed to *T. equigenitalis*. An exposed horse is one that was bred, either naturally or via artificial insemination, to a horse positive for *T. equigenitalis*, or one that is otherwise epidemiologically linked to a positive horse, as determined by State and Federal animal health officials. The total 939 horses involved in the CEM investigation are located in 48 States and include 272 stallions and 667 mares. The only States that currently have no positive or exposed horses are Hawaii and Rhode Island.

Of the 272 stallions, 85 (31.3 percent), including 76 exposed and 9 formerly positive, have now completed their entire testing and treatment protocol and are negative for *T. equigenitalis*. Another 95 exposed stallions have had at least one set of negative cultures prior to test breeding. Of the 667 mares, 466 (69.9 percent) have completed their testing and treatment protocol and are negative for *T. equigenitalis*.

The 21 positive stallions have been found in 7 States: Georgia (1), Illinois (3), Indiana (3), Iowa (1), Kentucky (4), Texas (1), and Wisconsin (8). Nine of the positive stallions have successfully completed their treatment and subsequent testing protocol and are now free of *T. equigenitalis*. Of the five positive mares, two were found in California, two in Illinois, and one in Wisconsin. One of the positive California mares has completed her treatment and testing protocol and is now free of *T. equigenitalis*.

The majority of work has been carried out on exposures from 2009 back to 2004, as first priority. Current epidemiological evidence also warrants identifying and testing 2001, 2002, and 2003 cohort stallions for a few of the positive stallions. Work is being organized to prioritize the later year cohorts followed by the earlier year cohorts.

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All positive horses, and all exposed horses that have been located, are currently under quarantine or hold order. Testing and treatment protocols are being put into action for all located horses.

#### **B. CEM in Georgia:**

The eight CEM exposed mares traced to Georgia have all completed testing and treatment and have been released from quarantine restriction. Two of three exposed stallions and their test mares have also completed testing/treatment and have been released.

The horse that has not completed the CEM testing/ treatment protocol is a stallion that tested positive for *Taylorella equigenetalis*. His two original test mares who became positive post-breeding have both completed treatment and re-testing and have been released. Since the initial test breeding, the stallion has undergone extensive treatment had several negative culture results and has been bred to another set of test mares. Post-breeding cultures of test mares are being carried out currently to complete his testing protocol and animal health officials are awaiting results before declaring the stallion's status.

Georgia may receive further traces as the national CEM investigation continues and possible links from a positive horse to cohort stallions or exposed mares are identified. Georgia horse owners should be aware that state and federal animal health officials, with participation of accredited attending equine practitioners and cooperation of owners of exposed horses, are working hard to complete all investigations and treatments to restore the state to a CEM negative status.

It is important to recognize that only a small number of individual horses in the state are involved, with limited impact on the overall equine breeding activities in the state. Nevertheless, all horse owners should be aware of official actions and abide by any necessary animal health management and biosecurity guidelines in order to support the return of the Georgia horse population to normal activity as soon as possible.

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### Links:

- USDA APHIS- Contagious Equine Metritis
- [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/hot\\_issues/cem/index.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/hot_issues/cem/index.shtml)
- The USDA APHIS National Center for Import Center (NCIE) International Animal Export Regulations web link is:
- <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/regulations/vs/iregs/animals/>
- Georgia Department of Agriculture- Home Page (See Featured Items)
- <http://agr.georgia.gov/02/doa/home/0,2473,38902732,00.html>
- Kentucky Department of Agriculture- Equine Program
- <http://www.kyagr.com/statevet/equine/index.htm>
- Iowa State University CVM- Contagious Equine Metritis Fact Sheet
- [http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Factsheets/pdfs/contagious\\_equine\\_metritis.pdf](http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Factsheets/pdfs/contagious_equine_metritis.pdf)

**CEM must be reported immediately upon diagnosis or suspicion of the disease.**

Federal: GA Area Veterinarian in Charge (AVIC): 770-922-7860

State: GA State Veterinarian: 404-656-3671